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ABSTRACT

This handbook on improving school climate is written for school administrators interested in doing a better job for students, staff, and parents. More than 100 ideas and methods on what to do to improve the climate in individual schools are included--ideas that can be adapted to large or small schools, wealthy or low income districts, and districts with increasing or decreasing enrollments. The author states that climate is composed of program determinants, process determinants, and material determinants. Emphasizing the importance of leader behavior in determining school climate, he includes two questionnaires, one intended to describe leadership behavior and the other intended to describe school climate. Personal suggestions from California school administrators, as well as descriptions of climate improvement programs in selected California schools, are included. (Author/DS)

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OPERATIONS NOTEBOOK 19

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IMPROVING THE SCHOOL CLIMATE

By
Frank J. Clark

EA 010 035

ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS, OCTOBER 1977

IMPROVING THE SCHOOL CLIMATE

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OPERATIONS NOTEBOOK
No. 19

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FJC

A HANDBOOK FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS
ON
HOW TO IMPROVE THE SCHOOL CLIMATE

"A positive school climate is both a means and an end. A good climate makes it possible to work productively toward important goals, such as academic learning, social development, and curriculum improvement.

It also makes school a good place to be, a satisfying and meaningful situation in which both adults and youth care to spend a substantial portion of their time."

School Climate Improvement: A Challenge to the School Administrator, Phi Delta Kappa.

HOW TO

Included are over a hundred ideas and methods on what to do to improve the climate in individual schools . . . .

TRANSFER

Ideas herein can be transferred from large schools to small schools, from high wealth districts to low wealth districts, from decreasing student enrollment districts to increasing enrollment districts.

REGARDLESS OF THE SITUATION, IDEAS HERE WILL HELP ADMINISTRATORS EITHER IN THE SCHOOL OR DISTRICT OFFICE DO A BETTER JOB FOR STUDENTS, STAFF, PARENTS - AND THEMSELVES.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1
BACKGROUND 2
WHAT ARE THE DETERMINANTS AND FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH SCHOOL CLIMATE 4
Program Determinants 6
Process Determinants 6
Material Determinants 7
A PRACTICAL PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING A GOOD SCHOOL CLIMATE 8
Plan of Attack 8
APPROVAL AND IMPROVEMENT 9
THE LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR DESCRIPTION QUESTIONNAIRE 11
Directions for LBDQ 11
SCHOOL CLIMATE LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR DESCRIPTION QUESTIONNAIRE . . . 12
LBDQ EVALUATION 12
LEADER BEHAVIOR 13
THE CFK LTD. SCHOOL CLIMATE PROFILE 14
EXAMPLES AND IDEAS FOR IMPROVING THE SCHOOL CLIMATE 17
Litter Program 17
Student Center 18
Administrative Goals 18
School Goals 19
Teacher Advisory Board (Getting Help) 19
Citizens Advisory Board (Getting Help) 20
1-3-6 Technique 20
Student Forum (Getting Help) 21
Curriculum Nights 22
Smile Form 23
Quick Reply Form 23
Onions and Flowers 24
Examples from: Amador Valley Joint Union High 24
Alisal Union Elementary 25
Mt. Diablo Unified School District 25
Alpine Union Elementary 25
Hanford Elementary School District 25
Lucia Mar Unified 26
San Lorenzo Unified School District 26
PERSONAL SUGGESTIONS FROM ADMINISTRATORS FROM THROUGHOUT THE STATE 26
Bob Lindstrom 26
Walter Klass 27
BUILDING A COLLEGIAL TEAM 27
What is a Collegial Team? 28
What a Collegial Team is Not 28
HOW TO BECOME A SCHOOL CLIMATE LEADER 29
Action Steps 29
DEVELOP GOOD PERSONAL ATTITUDE 30
Triangle of Good Climate 30
IF 31
It's Done with Mirrors 32
SUMMARY 33
HUMAN RESOURCES 34
BIBLIOGRAPHY 35
CFK LTD. Publications 35
A.C.S.A. Presentors Guide 35
Articles, Books and Reports 37

Introduction

Not too many years ago it was rather rare to find articles in the news media about public schools. Today, it's rare to pick up a paper and not see something about schools, much being negative.

Times have changed. Administrators have an ever-increasing battle to stay ahead, to remain calm, not to panic in face of tremendous pressures and conflict. Declining enrollments, closing of the schools, shrinking district budgets, changes in the employer-employee relationships are a few of the pressure variables that have drastically altered the role of today's administrator.

So things are different, what now? Several basic rules seem helpful to administrators.

- Develop a strong communication program between the four major groups of,

  a. Students
  b. Parents
  c. Teachers
  d. Classified employees

  (An advisory committee for each of these groups has worked well in many schools.)

  - Students

  Action speaks louder than words. Are you listening to the student body, or just saying so?

  - Parents

  Who are your key communicators? What are they saying about you and the school? How do you feel about letting parents get involved in community and school activities?

  - Teachers

  Are you willing to work with department heads, bringing them together in small groups and with the total staff. Do you have an advisory committee of teachers you run ideas through, prior to bringing them to the total faculty?

  - Classified

  It has been said over and over again: the secretary and/or custodian, are key communicators. Do you have an advisory committee for classified personnel?

How do these groups communicate with each other? Representatives from the student group need to talk to teachers, teachers to parents, classified to teachers, all to each other.

- Be Willing To Change

  Be willing to change anything and everything. Students don't want to go to the library at noon, or do they? Parents don't like teaching by contract, or do they? Many times what may appear as something that won't work turns out as a winning idea.

- Be Positive

  Things are often tough even on good days. How can one keep from getting discouraged on bad days. Attitudes are transferred. Being positive, enthusiastic and alert rubs off on others.

- Be On The Offense

  The community needs to know all the good things going on in the school. Good news reports to the community cannot be stressed enough. Many times we forget to compliment.

- Team work

  Support the staff, develop a team concept.

- Ideas

  Use good ideas from other schools. Time isn't available to reinvent the wheel; use methods that have been tried and are working.

Keeping the above ideas in mind, the following pages describe what school climate is all about. Along with this, useable ideas are listed. All may not work for you. Several you'll not want to use, depending on your situation.

The illustrations in this notebook come directly from the Presentor's Guide entitled, Improving School Climate, developed through Project Leadership. The Presentor's Guide is available from the ACSA Norwalk Office.

In short, the goals of this Notebook are to help school administrators by:

1. Providing background information (the rationale for improving school climate) and the theory behind improving the climate.

2. Helping them become aware of how to improve the school climate in their locations.

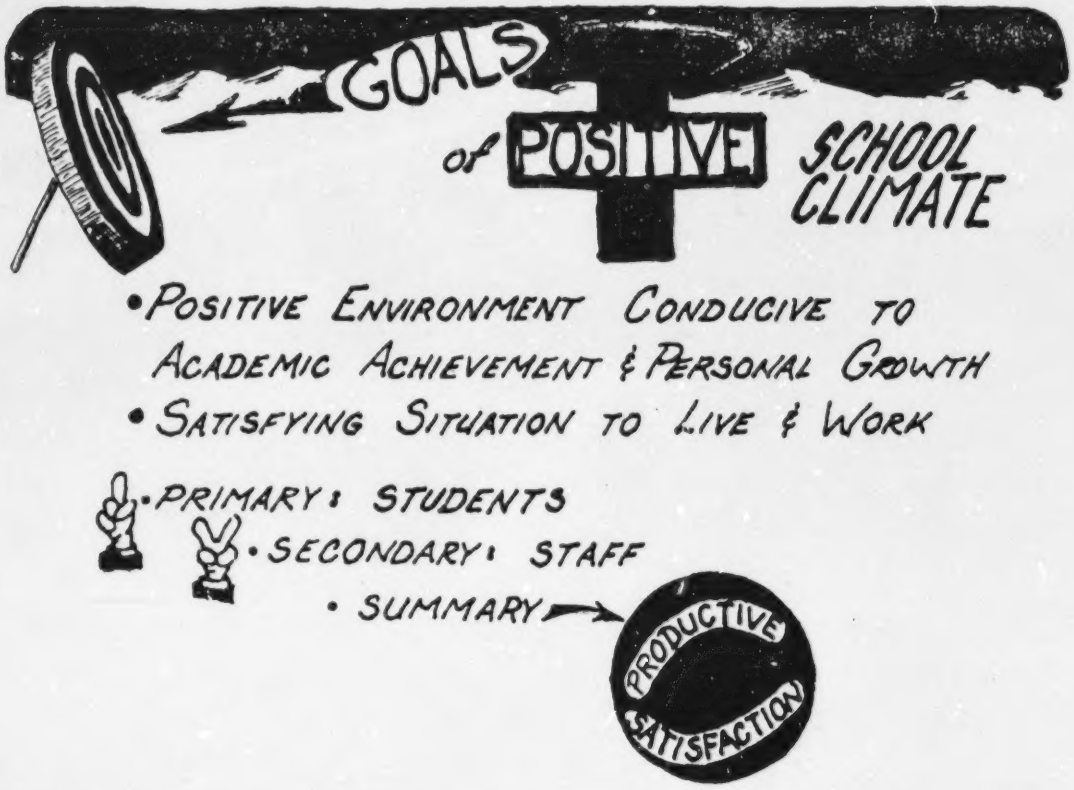
3. Presenting several examples of what has and can be done.

Credit for much of the material herein goes to CADRE (the Collegial Association for the Development and Renewal of Educators). Much of the information is drawn from the book Improving the School Climate: Challenge to Administrators, written by Dr. Bob Fox and others. The book is available from the Nueva Learning Center. Readers are encouraged to order a copy.

Background

We hear and read more and more about schools. Why they are successful or why they fail. Throughout the country, educators are concerned with developing a

humane school climate. A positive school climate is an important issue in many respects. Although today's problems in education may seem nearly impossible to solve, it doesn't necessarily follow that we should give up, being content with a "no solution" answer.



Unfortunately, many of our problems do not have neatly packaged answers. This booklet doesn't offer all of the answers either; however, there may be some insights offered.

School climate improvement can clearly help resolve the educational problems of today.

Improving school climate does not de-emphasize skills, attitudes, and knowledge students gain through studies in academic areas such as language arts, social studies, mathematics, and science. It suggests that the most efficient learning programs occur in a wholesome and humane school climate.

School personnel can affect positively the nature and the wholesomeness of the school's climate. The administrator is a climate leader.

School principals need not be trapped by the existing conceptualization of their roles and by the accompanying expectations established for them by such factors as tradition, prevailing practice, faculty, parents, and students. The principal is a prisoner of these forces only if s/he lacks the strength and vision to create a personal role. The following, from the study of change in the League of Cooperating Schools, is so true:

The principal can be a key agent for change. However, even the best principals as rated by superintendents need a whole new set of skills in order to be effective change agents. These skills include such things as managing decision making; implementing scientific problem solving procedures; becoming aware of a great variety of resources which can be brought to bear on such problem solving; becoming more discriminating in selecting such resources; and developing the skills to deal with the conflict built in the middle management role.

The principal as a change agent in effect becomes a "rate buster." That is, s/he differs from other principals by setting higher goals for self and the school.

What are the Determinants and Factors Associated with the School Climate?

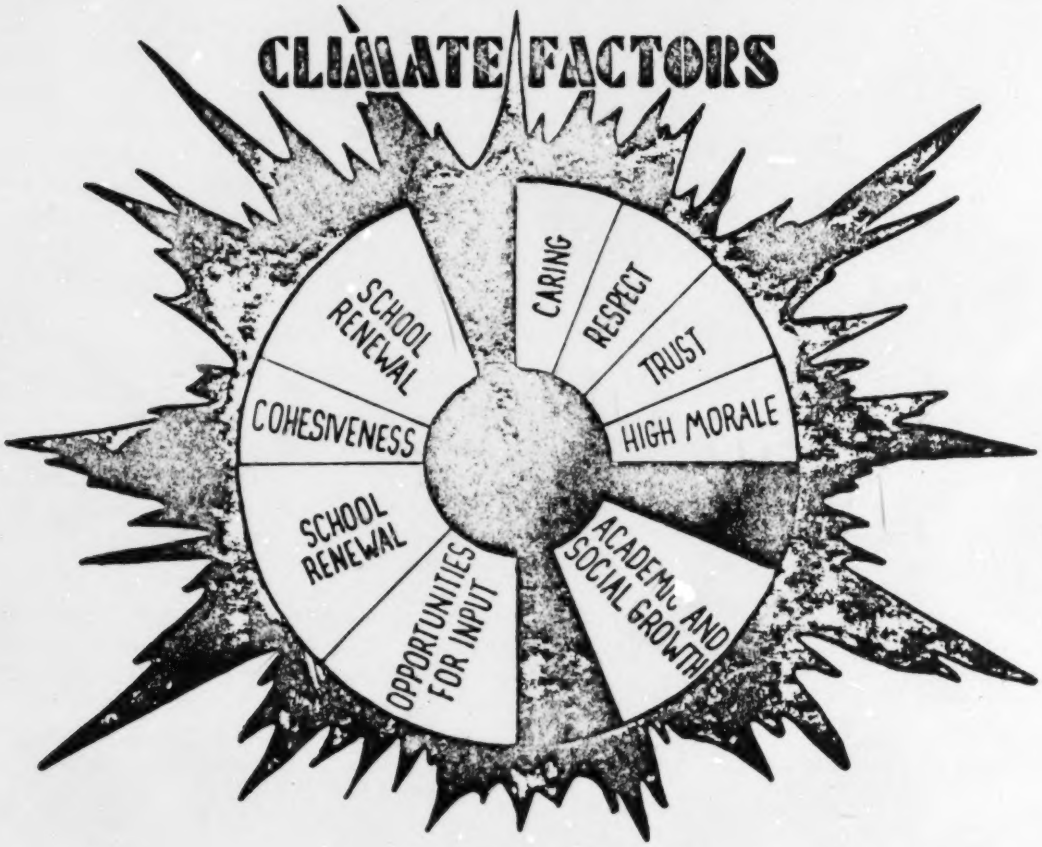
There are eight general climate factors that largely determine the quality of the school climate. The quality of the climate results from the interactions of the school's program, processes, and physical condition.

- A positive school climate has strong evidence of:

Respect - Students see themselves as worthy. The staff feels the same way.

Trust - People don't let each other down. Others can be counted upon in times of need.

High Morale - People feel good about what is happening.



Opportunities for Input - People cherish opportunities to contribute ideas. A lack of voice is counterproductive to self-esteem.

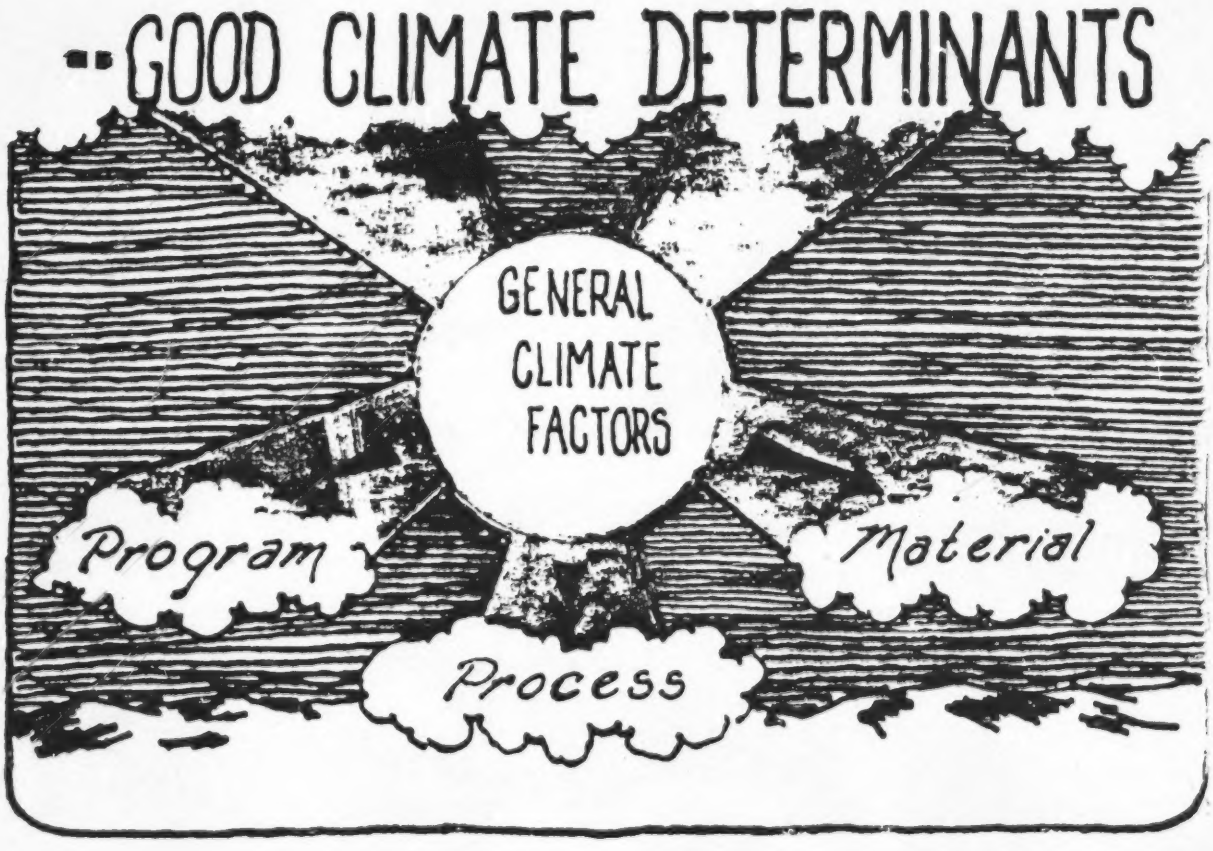
Continuous Academic and Social Growth - Students and staff need to develop academic, social, and physical skills, knowledge, and attitudes.

Cohesiveness - Members need to feel a part of the school, having a chance to exert their influence on it in collaboration with others.

School Renewal - The school should be self-renewing. With renewal, difference is seen as interesting, to be cherished. Diversity and pluralism are valued. New conditions are faced with poise. Adjustments are worked out as needed.

Caring - Individuals feel other persons are concerned about them as human beings.

In addition to the general factors, there are a number of climate determinants within the major categories, e.g., programs, processes, and materials. Briefly, the determinants:

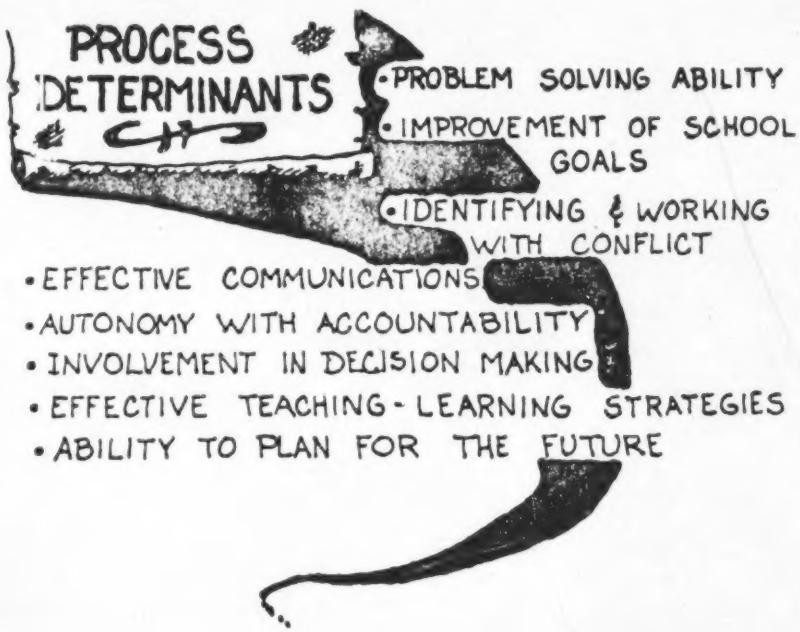


Program Determinants

- Opportunities for active learning--students are totally involved, able to demonstrate use of their knowledge and skills.
- Individualized performance expectations--these take into account individual differences. Maximum challenges for fully motivating individuals are offered.
- Varied learning environments--these avoid a single, standard mode of instruction.
- Flexible curriculum and extracurricular activities--these provide a wide variety of pace and content options for learners.
- Support and structure appropriate to learner's maturity--the school designs its programs, activities, and requirements consistent with the everchanging intellectual, social, and physical developmental characteristics of youth.
- Rules cooperatively determined--educators and students develop rules and regulations that are viewed as reasonable and desirable by those affected.
- Varied reward systems--this minimizes punishments and emphasizes positive reinforcement.

Process Determinants

- Problem solving ability--well-developed structures and procedures for sensing problems, for inventing solutions, for implementing them, and for evaluating their effectiveness, are developed and strengthened.


PROCESS DETERMINANTS
• PROBLEM SOLVING ABILITY
• IMPROVEMENT OF SCHOOL GOALS
• IDENTIFYING & WORKING WITH CONFLICT
• EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS
• AUTONOMY WITH ACCOUNTABILITY
• INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION MAKING
• EFFECTIVE TEACHING-LEARNING STRATEGIES
• ABILITY TO PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

- Improvement of school goals--these are clearly stated and understood by parents, students, and educators. Students, staff members, and administrators are encouraged to develop personal goals directed toward their own growth within the context of the school program.

- Identifying and working with conflicts--conflict is natural, it occurs within individuals, between them, and between groups. In a favorable climate, conflict is accurately identified and effectively worked on.

- Effective communications--communication involves sending, receiving, and understanding feelings, and ideas--openly and honestly.

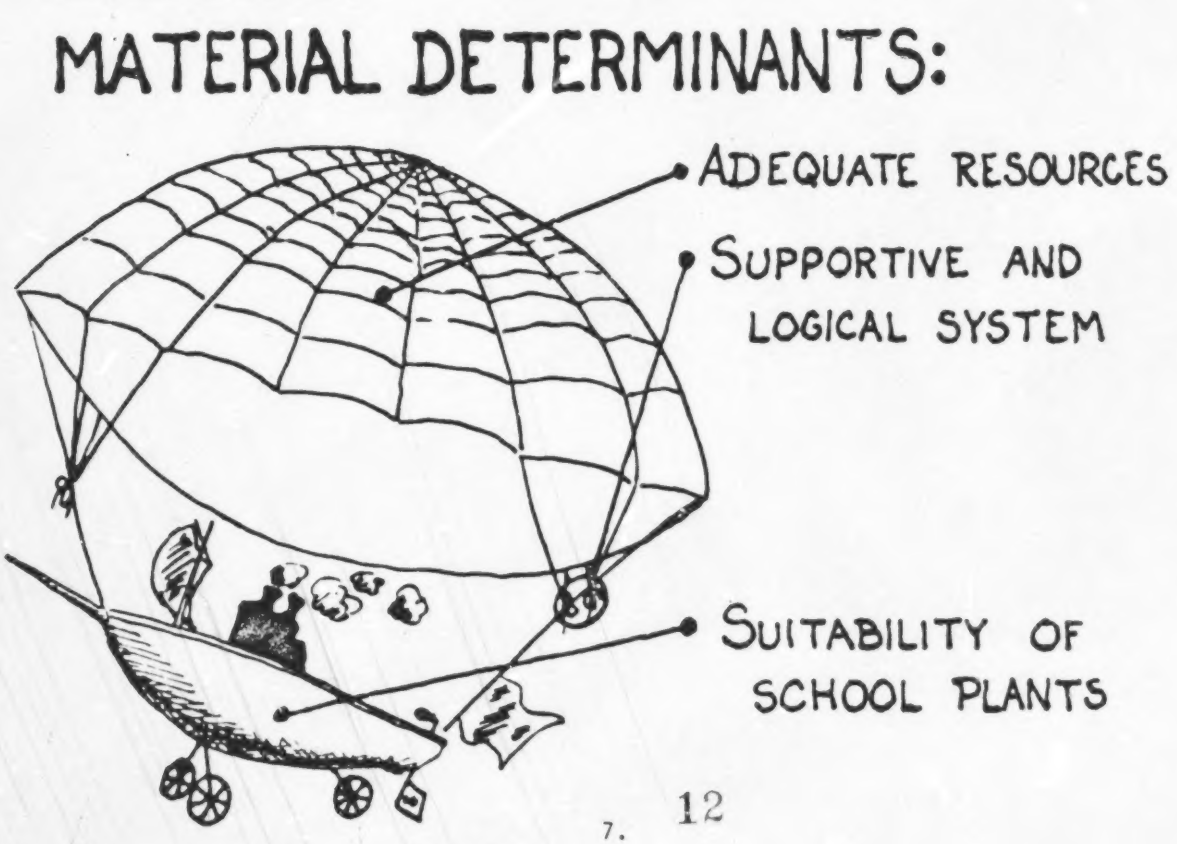
- Involvement in decision making--Persons affected by a decision have an opportunity to provide input. A variety of decision-making models are used; the entire process is reviewed periodically for effectiveness and efficiency.

- Autonomy with accountability--this balances the freedom of being independent and self-governing with the necessity and desirability of being responsible for actions through reporting and explaining processes in achieving goals and objectives.

- Effective teaching-learning strategies--students have varied learning styles; educators attempt to employ methods that consider these styles, as well as student maturity.

- Ability to plan for the future--the school determines and plans for its immediate and long-range future.

Material Determinants



- Adequate resources--this includes provisions for instructional materials, laboratories, desirable classrooms and learning-area equipment, furniture, textbooks, references, other materials, and adequate expendable supplies.

- Supportive and efficient logistical system--the system provides quality in such areas as student scheduling and in custodial, maintenance, secretarial, purchasing, budgeting, and accounting services.

- Suitability of school plant--the institution is modified as program and human needs change.

Programs processes and material determinants, when defined efficiently and effectively lead toward productivity and satisfaction. Both productivity and satisfaction are needed by a student before s/he can become successful. Productivity in students refers to:

- achieving basic skills...
- developing constructive attitudes...
- developing and expanding an adequate knowledge base...
- clarifying values...
- utilizing inquiry and problem solving processes...

Satisfaction refers to:

- gaining a sense of personal worth...
- enjoying school as a pleasant place to live and work...
- gaining rewards from participation in worthwhile activities...

Once again, both productivity and satisfaction are needed. A student can be producing, but if s/he isn't happy and/or satisfied with what is being produced, one must question whether the educator's mission has been accomplished.

A PRACTICAL PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING A GOOD SCHOOL CLIMATE...

Before trying to change or improve the school climate a plan of attack is needed. The following is one such plan--developed at Kennedy Junior High in the Cupertino Union School District (California).

Plan of Attack

I. Developed and conducted survey...(Needs Assessment)
II. Formed Committees and Determined their Operation...(Analysis And Intervention)
III. Results...
    J. Clean-up Program
    K. Principal Setting Personal Goals
    L. School Goals
    M. Student Center
    N. Action Forms
        1. Smile
        2. Quick Reply
        3. Onions and Flowers
IV. Summary...
    A. Better communication: students - teachers - parents
    B. Defining new directions - where Kennedy was going
    C. Cleaner school

D. Higher staff morale and closer working relationship
E. Better school spirit
F. Curricular evaluation and improvement.

APPROVAL AND IMPROVEMENT

At Kennedy Junior High School, the faculty seemed concerned about how the program was functioning. A faculty meeting was called to discuss a method for resolving some of the dissatisfaction. It was agreed upon that the faculty would divide into small groups and answer two simple questions:

1. What are the general things at the school the group supports?
2. What things need improving?

Some of the general things the group supported are illustrated below:

GROUP SUPPORT...

- MORE SPACE TO EAT
- GOOD ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT
- LIKE ROTATING SCHEDULE
- BROCHURE — RE: BACK TO SCHOOL
- TEACHERS SUPPORT EACH OTHER
- COMMUNICATIONS CLEARER
- LIKE CANDY SHACK
- FREEDOM IN CLASSROOM
- TEACHERS INVOLVEMENT IN BUDGET PLANNING

General things that needed improving are illustrated in the chart below:

-NEED IMPROVEMENT...

- CONCERN ABOUT STUDENT TREATMENT BY OFFICE STAFF
- STUDENTS FEEL PROGRAMS ARE IRRELEVANT
- TOO MANY STUDENTS FOR FACILITIES
- INADEQUATE TEACHER ROOM
- NEED MORE ADVANCE NOTICE OF EVENTS
- BETTER INTER-DEPARTMENT COMMUNICATION
- MORE TEACHER CONSISTENCY ON RULES
- NEED TYPEWRITERS
- IN-SERVICE DAY TOO LONG
- IMPROPER VENTILATION

Responses to the questions provided sufficient feedback for action using the model in the illustration. This approach is relatively simple and uncomplicated.

PROBLEM SOLVING MODEL-

THE LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR DESCRIPTION QUESTIONNAIRE

A more sophisticated approach for improving the school climate comes from the use of the Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ). The LBDQ is one of the best tools to use in assessing school climate. It can be used by the administrator alone or with any number of groups, e.g., students, staff parents, etc. The more secure a person, the broader the base one might pick for answering questions on the LBDQ. Results of the feedback from this instrument reveal two things:

- What is expected?
- What currently exists?

When using the survey, have the group(s) fill out two (2) copies of the instrument. Instruct the group(s) to answer the first question on one answer sheet. Then ask the group(s) to complete the survey by answering the second question on a second response sheet. The two surveys, in this way, differentiate between the "ideal" and the "real."

NOTE: THIS PROCEDURE MAY BE A HIGH-RISK EXERCISE. ADMINISTRATORS SHOULD BE READY TO LIVE WITH THE RESULTS AND ACT UPON THEM.

Following are the instructions for the survey. Only an abbreviated version of the LBDQ is illustrated here; the full instrument is available from:

Visual Products Division 3M
3M Center
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

(Results from one school are also included.)

Directions for LBDQ

READ EACH ITEM CAREFULLY.

On the First Response Sheet:

A. THINK about how frequently you would like an IDEAL principal to engage in the behavior described by the item.

B. DECIDE whether s/he (A) always, (B) often, (C) occasionally, (D) seldom, or (E) never acts as described by the item.

D. DRAW a circle around one of the five letters (ABCDE) following the item to show the answer you have selected.

A = Always
B = Often
C = Occasionally
D = Seldom
E = Never
F = Not applicable

E. MARK your answers as shown in the example below.

EXAMPLE: S/he often acts as described.....A B C D E F
EXAMPLE: S/he never acts as described.....A B C D E F
EXAMPLE: S/he occasionally acts as described....A B C D E F

On the Second Response Sheet:

A. Think about how frequently you believe the principal actually engages in the behavior described by the item. Mark your response sheet accordingly.

Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire

Abbreviated Form

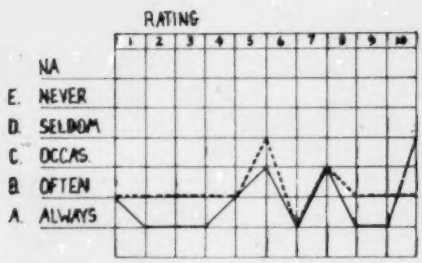
A = Always
B = Often
C = Occasionally
D = Seldom
E = Never
F = Not applicable

Sample Questions--

1. S/he acts as the spokesperson of the group.....A B C D E F
2. S/he makes pep talks to stimulate the group.....A B C D E F
3. S/he lets group members know what is expected of them.....A B C D E F
4. S/he is friendly and approachable.....A B C D E F
5. S/he encourages overtime work.....A B C D E F
6. S/he makes accurate decisions.....A B C D E F
7. S/he encourages the use of uniform procedures.....A B C D E F
8. S/he permits the members to use their own judgment in solving problems.....A B C D E F

LBDQ EVALUATION

REAL ---------
IDEAL ———



Note: This sample evaluation scale compares the responses as marked "real" compared to the individuals desired "ideal."

LBDQ Evaluation

Note: This is an example; the profile is not necessarily congruent with the sample statements in the survey.

Leader Behavior. . .

A third approach for improving the school climate comes from a special study sponsored by the CFK Ltd. Foundation out of Denver, Colorado. A School Climate Profile Instrument was designed to assist in assessing the climate by:

(1) providing a convenient means of assessing the school's climate factors and determinants so decisions can be made about priority targets for improvement, and

(2) serving as a benchmark against which a school can measure climate change--by using a pre-post administration of the instrument, observers can determine what preceived improvements took place.

Five indicators for each climate factor and determinant are identified; the instrument provides data to help decide what factors and determinants need to be looked at more intensively.

The instrument takes about twenty to twenty-five minutes to complete. It may prove more convenient to administer the profile in several brief sittings rather than all at once.

Data from the instrument are more powerful when gathered from people who see the school from different perspectives. Plans should be made to gather data from teachers, students, administrators, support staff members, parents.

Data based on people's perceptions of how things are or how they feel about them are important. Most behavior is motivated by the individual's perceptions of reality. It should be clear, however, that other kinds of information, such as obtained from observation, can also be useful as part of a more extensive diagnostic effort.

The data provided by this profile can be analyzed in a number of interesting ways. Among them are:

1. Which climate factors or determinants are lowest on the scale? Which are the highest? (The lowest items can be considered as candidates for climate improvement projects.)

2. For which climate factors or determinants are the discrepancies between "what is" and "what should be" the largest? If there is a large discrepancy, perhaps the reasons for the dissonance should be examined.

3. Are there marked discrepancies between how one role group ranks a climate factor or determinant from the way it is ranked by another role group (either regarding what is or what should be)? If so, those discrepancies furnish stimuli for further discussion and examination.

In the following information, page A. gives an illustration from the Profile, page B. illustrates the total Profile when completed and page C gives an example of findings in one California school by analyzing the perceptions of the principal vs. the vice-principal.

PAGE A: A sample illustration of the survey form with just a few of the questions.

The CFK Ltd. School Climate Profile (Copyright 1973)

This instrument is part of an extensive description and analysis of the school's climate and should be used in association with School Climate Improvement: A Challenge for the School Administrator. (Available from the Nueva Learning Center, 6565 Skyline Blvd., Hillsborough, CA 94010, $4.25).

I AM A:

_____ Student
_____ Teacher
_____ Parent
_____ Secretary, custodian, or other staff member
_____ Administrator in this school
_____ Superintendent or central administrator

PART A
GENERAL CLIMATE FACTORS

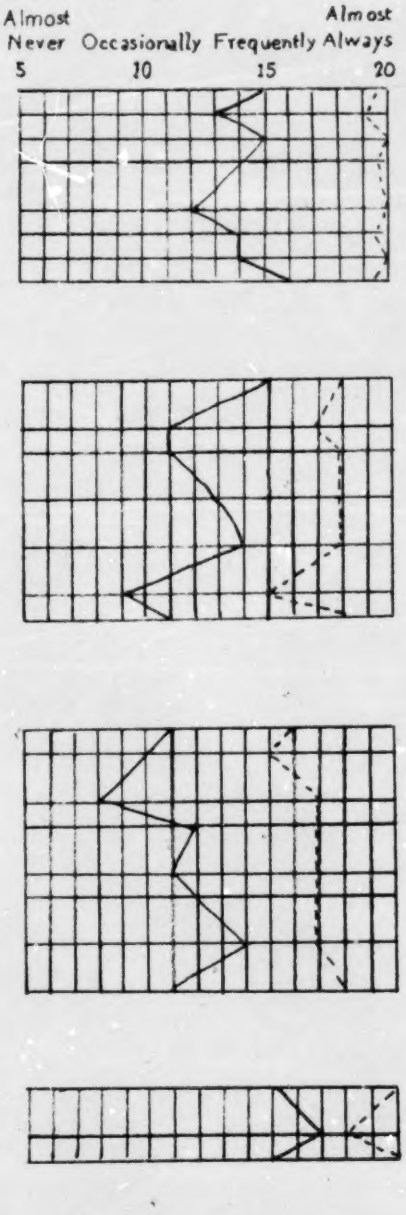
	WHAT IS:				WHAT SHOULD BE:			
	Almost Never	Occasionally	Frequently	Almost Always	Almost Never	Occasionally	Frequently	Almost Always
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
RESPECT								
1. In this school even low achieving students are respected.								
2. Teachers treat students as persons.								
3. Parents are considered by this school as important collaborators.								
4. Teachers from one subject area or grade level respect those from other subject areas.								
5. Teachers in this school are proud to be teachers.								
TRUST								
1. Students feel that teachers are "on their side."								
2. While we don't always agree, we can share our concerns with each other openly.								
3. Our principal is a good spokesman before the superintendent and the board for our interests and needs.								
4. Students can count on teachers to listen to their side of the story and to be fair.								
5. Teachers trust students to use good judgment.								
HIGH MORALE								
1. This school makes students enthusiastic about learning.								
2. Teachers feel pride in this school and in its students.								
3. Attendance is good; students stay away only for urgent and good reasons.								
4. Parents, teachers, and students would rise to the defense of this school's program if it were challenged.								
5. I like working in this school.								

PAGE B: The total profile sheet utilized to score the responses - the dotted and solid line will give you an idea of what the profile looks like when finished.

Summary Form of the CFK Ltd.
School Climate Profile

For_____School

Based on data summarized from _____respondents.
(State Role Group)



A. GENERAL CLIMATE FACTORS
   1. Respect
   2. Trust
   3. High Morale
   4. Opportunities for Input
   5. Continuous Academic and Social Growth
   6. Cohesiveness
   7. School Renewal
   8. Caring

B. PROGRAM DETERMINANTS
   1. Opportunities for Active Learning
   2. Individualized Performance Expectations
   3. Varied Learning Environments
   4. Flexible Curriculum and Extracurricular Activities
   5. Support and Structure Appropriate to Learner's Maturity
   6. Rules Cooperatively Determined
   7. Varied Reward Systems

C. PROCESS DETERMINANTS
   1. Problem-Solving Ability
   2. Improvement of School Goals
   3. Identifying and Working with Conflicts
   4. Effective Communications
   5. Involvement in Decision Making
   6. Autonomy with Accountability
   7. Effective Teaching-Learning Strategies
   8. Ability to Plan for the Future

D. MATERIAL DETERMINANTS
   1. Adequate Resources
   2. Supportive and Efficient Logistical System
   3. Suitability of School Plant

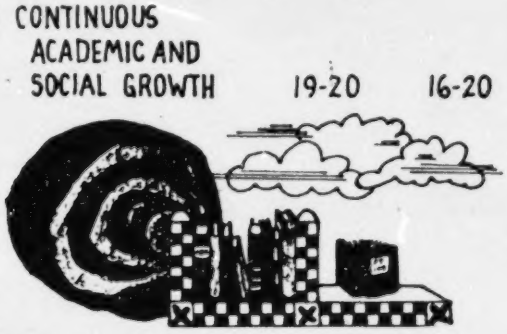
——— What is
- - - - What should be

PAGE C: A portion of the response in one school comparing the perceptions of the Principal and the Vice Principal.

SCHOOL CLIMATE PROFILE

KENNEDY SCHOOL

GENERAL CLIMATE FACTORS		Principal		Vice Principal	
		What Is	What Should Be	What Is	What Should Be
1 - 5	Respect	17	20	20	20
6 - 10	Trust	16	19	13	20
11 - 15	Opportunity for Input	19	20	18	20
16 - 20	High Morale	17	20	15	20
21 - 25	Continuous Academic and Social Growth	19	20	16	20

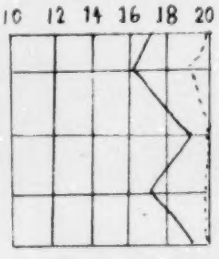


Kennedy School Climate Profile

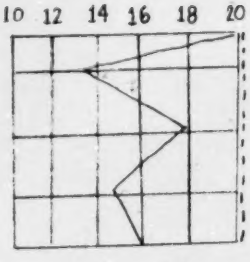
GENERAL CLIMATE FACTORS

1 - 5 Respect
6 - 10 Trust
11 - 15 Opportunity for Input
16 - 20 High Morale
21 - 25 Continuous academic and social growth

Principal



Vice Principal



——— What is
- - - What should be

Obviously there is a difference of perceptions in this case - particularly in some areas which might indicate a need to obtain additional perceptions: Parents Students and/or Staff.

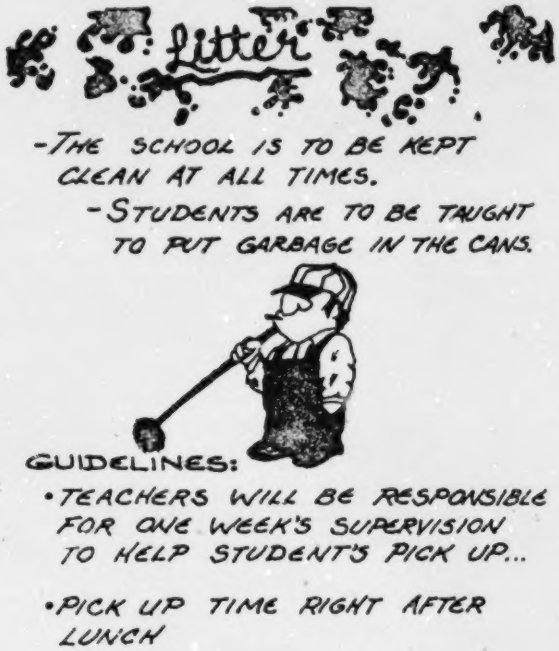
Once again, both the LBDQ and the School Climate Profile are high risk instrument Be prepared to share the results. Failure to do so could cause loss of faith, support and credibility.

So far this notebook has been dealing with what school climate is, why a school should have a healthy climate and ways to determine or diagnose the level of climate in a school.

Once you are committed to affecting change in yourself, the school and/or your staff start examining the results of your survey, needs assessment, (What is desired) and the problem solving model on page 10 and then begin to examine (what currently exists - what is) which then helps determine, "What needs to be done." Now, let's look at some examples.

EXAMPLES AND IDEAS FOR IMPROVING THE SCHOOL CLIMATE

Litter Program:


litter
-THE SCHOOL IS TO BE KEPT CLEAN AT ALL TIMES.
-STUDENTS ARE TO BE TAUGHT TO PUT GARBAGE IN THE CANS.
GUIDELINES:
•TEACHERS WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ONE WEEK'S SUPERVISION TO HELP STUDENT'S PICK UP...
•PICK UP TIME RIGHT AFTER LUNCH

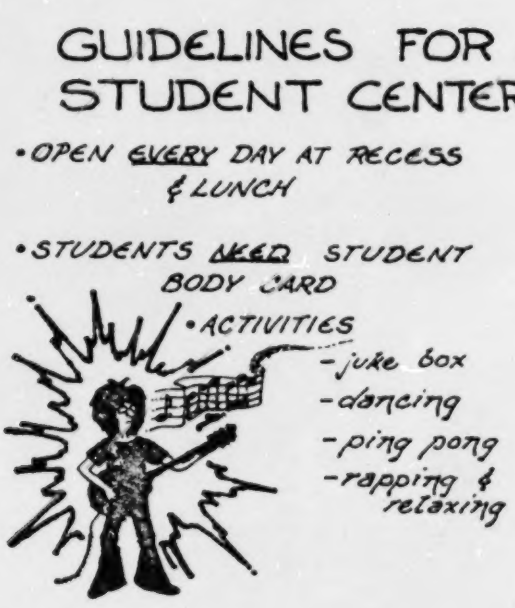
How our litter program started

- Students came to the Principal and asked to eat their lunch in the courtyards of the school that were shaded and contained grass.
- The staff and student body discussed the use, misuse and clean up of the yards.
- The following guidelines were established:
  a) All students would try not to throw paper down
  b) Every day one class would spend ten minutes after lunch picking up litter
  c) If grounds were clean for three days running, school would be dismissed fifteen minutes early on Friday.
  d) If grounds were messy, students would lose ten minutes from one recess period.

Results: The grounds were spotless.

Conclusion: Students respect and appreciate a clean school.

Student Center:



Another Example:

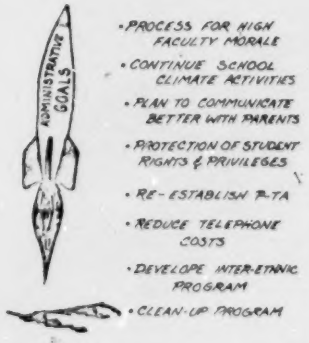
Students needed somewhere to gather and meet with each other to socialize. In one junior high school in California the following guidelines were set for a Student Center:

- The Student Center was open every school day at recess and lunch.
- Activities included juke box, dancing, ping pong, etc.
- Teachers supervised students while at the Center.
- Discipline rules were enforced, such as:
  a. Eating in the Center prohibited...
  b. Rowdyism was unacceptable...

The Student Center Committee met weekly to assess problems and to work on programs.

There is considerable professional literature these days suggesting that administrators work on defined goals. Examples of things principals have considered are:

Administrative Goals:

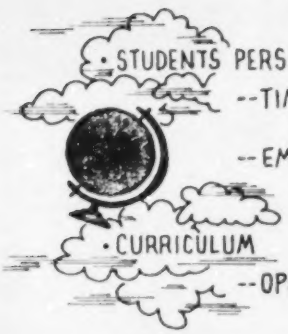


School Goals:

SCHOOL GOALS

WORK TOWARD

- STUDENT/PARENT/TEACHER RELATIONS
  - -- SOCIALLY WELL-ADJUSTED STUDENTS
  - -- OPPORTUNITIES FOR INFORMAL MEETINGS



- STUDENTS PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT
  - --TIME TO LEARN RESPECT FOR SELF AND OTHERS
  - --EMPHASIS ON LEARNING RATHER THAN GRADES
- CURRICULUM
  - --OPPORTUNITIES SCHEDULED FOR ALL TO PARTICIPATE IN DEVELOPMENT
  - --APPROPRIATE EMPHASIS ON THE FINE ARTS

Little happens without identified goals and specific action steps.

Teacher Advisory Group

Shared decision making and participation in management are democratic processes; they require considerable time. To combine involvement, efficiency, and ownership for plans of attack establishing a teacher advisory board is one possibility.

Representatives from each department in the school are selected, elected, or volunteer to be members of the Teacher Advisory Board.

TEACHER ADVISORY BOARD

- REPRESENTATIVES FROM ALL STAFF...

- --1st TUESDAY -- MEET MONTHLY
- --2nd TUESDAY -- GENERAL TEACHER MEETING
- --3rd TUESDAY -- DEPARTMENT HEADS
- --4th TUESDAY -- ALTERNATE DAY FOR ADVISORY IF NEEDED

PURPOSES:

ADVISORY -- PROBLEMS & SOLUTIONS

GENERAL -- INFORMATIONAL
VOTING ON ADVISORY BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

Citizens Advisory Group:* Getting Help

Citizens Advisory groups, like staff groups can be very useful.

These committees are not to become policy-making bodies, manage, or direct the school. Through improved understanding and information the school can and will change in the direction of clearly demonstrated needs and desires of the community.

- Authorization:
  Such committees are authorized under Board Policy and operate according to organizational constraints established by the Superintendent of Schools.

- Committee Composition:
  All residents of the school attendance area, all parents of children enrolled in the school, and all school staff members are eligible for membership.

  Principal calls an organizational meeting to which all persons eligible for participation are invited.

  Committee may function as arm of the P.T.A. or Home/School Club or as an independent unit. The principal serves as advisor to the group.

- Meetings:
  Meetings are open public meetings, held regularly.

- Functions:
  a. Improve home-school communications
  b. Increase parent understanding of school programs
  c. Improve staff understanding of parents' opinions and attitudes
  d. Improve joint exploration of future school needs

- Communication with the School District:
  If the committee wishes to communicate ideas or information to the district administration or the Board of Education, the communications can be jointly presented by the principal and the chairperson of the Advisory Committee to the Superintendent of Schools. Communications to the Board of Education are transmitted by the Superintendent.

Schools are staffed by professionals - paid for by citizens. As staff involvement on professional matters is essential, input from parents is treasured.

THE 1-3-6 TECHNIQUE

During workshops provided through Project Leadership on School Climate the 1-3-6 technique was used. This technique can be utilized with students, parents, or staff.

The 1-3-6 process is conducted as follows:

1. Ask everyone in attendance to list as many ideas as s/he can think of for school improvement. Give them five minutes to do this.

*Recommendation: Order Operations Notebook No. 16, Working With Advisory Committees, (Olivero, James L.), from ACSA, Burlingame.

2. Then everybody gets into groups of three, each group picks a chairperson, reads his/her list aloud. They add to that list any items the other two people have thought of that s/he has not.

3. Two groups of three get together. They pick a chairperson. The chairperson reads his/her list and adds any comments of the other five people that have not thought of.

This is then correlated, published and distributed. Recipients can then use the items they feel would help them improve school climate.

Other Input

What's school all about? School is about students! Whenever possible, those involved in the learning process should be allowed the space to provide their input.

For example; a group of students meeting with a principal on a weekly basis:

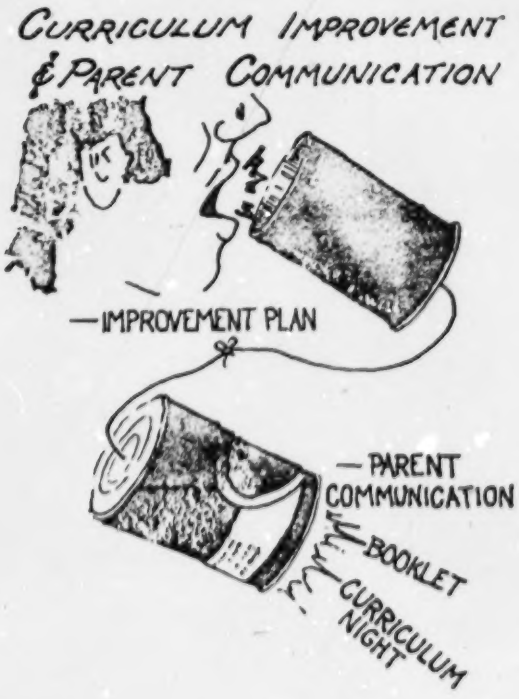
Student Forum: Getting Help

STUDENT FORUM
PURPOSES:
• DISCUSS CAMPUS HAPPENINGS
• LISTEN TO STUDENT FEELINGS
• AD HOC GROUP TO STUDENT COUNCIL
• FEEDBACK VEHICLE TO OTHER STUDENTS
UNITED WE STAND

Students are released from class for approximately one hour to attend these meetings, which are informal. Possibly once or twice a month the group goes out to lunch with the principal. The students look forward to their weekly meetings and enjoy the informal atmosphere and take advantage of the opportunity of talking to the principal in a small group.

This group of students can be just as important as staff or parent advisory groups in helping the principal receive sound feedback. An extremely important factor in building a student forum or advisory group is to get wide participation and representation from all groups or cliques on campus - Don't just include the "good citizens" or just the popular students - invite some students who are not finding success or the happiness they were told by parents and teachers that school would be.

Curriculum Nights: An Effective School Climate Activity



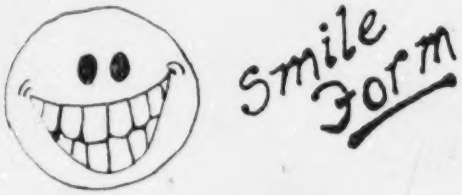
Parents and citizens need to know what, why, how, how well, and what next -- all curriculum issues. An abbreviated approach follows:

- Improvement - Staff
  a. Department heads meet with principal, exchange ideas for improving the academics
  b. Areas for examination are identified:
     the history of the department, texts and materials used, philosophy of department, objectives (where they are going), etc. are considered.

- Parent communication
  a. A curriculum booklet can be prepared and sent home to all parents.
  b. Once a month parents can be invited to attend "curriculum" nights at the school, hearing a different department explain its program each month.

'SMILE FORM:

Not every matter of communication falls into the urgent category, but in a general "needs to be done." Let the office know how we can help you in the classroom



From:_____
Teacher's name
and Room #

To: Check one

Principal	
Secretary	
Custodian	
Vice Prin.	
District O.	

The following Needs To Be Done:

Thanks for doing:

If the matter is not of an urgent nature, this form can be used to talk about needs and to transmit positive comments.

WITHIN 48 HOURS

DATE:
FROM: TO:

CONCERN:

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPLY - ACTION TAKEN

Surveys have shown that a great deal of teachers' conversations are in the negative vein.

One way to deal with this is to give teachers a chance to let you know how they feel and what they want.

The Quick Reply Form may be a high risk venture. The principal must provide a reply within 48 hours. When working smoothly, it's an excellent form, all but eliminating critical feelings from the staff. - Don't exceed 48 hours, even if it is only a progress report!

Onions and Flowers form sent periodically to teachers and/or others. It is not necessary that the individual fill in a name to return it to the principal.

To The Principal --

Date:_____

From:_____
(Does not have to be filled in by staff)

ONIONS & FLOWERS

WE NEED TO HEAR YOUR PROBLEM—MAYBE WE CAN HELP!!

- RETURN TO SECRETARY ASAP
- ONIONS & FLOWERS DISTRIBUTED REGULARY

-"I WAS PROMISED THE FOLLOWING; HASN'T BEEN DONE YET..."
-"I NEED THE FOLLOWING SUPPLIES..."
-"WE NEED IN-SERVICE IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS..."
-"COMMUNICATION NEEDS IMPROVING, I SUGGEST..."
-"HERE ARE PERSONAL PROBLEMS; CAN YOU HELP..."
-"SOME OF OUR POLICIES ARE OLD, UNFAIR, OR NEED CHANGING; I SUGGEST..."

- FLOWERS

Thanks for ....

This form enables the staff to list things they like; they can also list things they feel need attention.

OTHER PROMISING SCHOOL CLIMATE PRACTICES

Amador Valley Joint Union High

* Send congratulatory notices home for each student at least once a semester.
* Every teacher makes one minimum phone call home per day.
* Invite parents in to each classroom on an informal basis at least once a semester.
* Develop lunch period activities for students.
* When a student has made a special accomplishment, or achievement, give him/her permission (and support) to call home to tell his/her parents the good news.
* Form teachers advisory group.
* Select projects to involve staff, parents, students, in and away from school.

* Meet once a month with custodial staff, secretarial staff, department chairpersons and student body officers.
* Involve teacher representatives on all budget, schedulings, committees, etc.
* School newsletter - send home to community.

Alisal Union Elementary

* Develop student responsibility handbook with student input.
* Techniques for improving appearance of grounds.
* Staff and students share interests and hobbies.
* After school recreation program.
* Keep things going in the Press - positive happenings in school and district.
* Parent Advisory Committee tour each class, work on understanding what is happening.
* Awarding "Principal's Pin" for outstanding things students do.
* Meet with students to assess their reaction to school. What I learned in school today card.

Mt. Diablo Unified School District

* Monthly awards - recognition during assembly, teachers, classes, etc.
* Support recognition card for learning improvement.
* Annual Disneyland trip - reward for good citizenship.
* Forties and fifties days - dress up - students and for staff.
* Active school spirit.
* Mid-progress report for students.
* Staff pot-luck lunches. Invite parents to school for lunch.
* "Bouquet Board" for staff.
* Classroom monthly newsletter.

Alpine Union Elementary

* Staff "climate" inservice.
* Sweatshirt Day
* First week name tags for staff/students.
* Staff eat lunch with students.
* Staff breakfast meetings.
* Improve lunch program for students.
* Improve staff lounge.
* Staff social planning committee.
* Staff/student birthday recognition.
* Schedule V.I.P. visit to encourage site clean-up

Hanford Elementary School District

* "Greeting senders" for students - Good news reports to parents about their student.
* Campus projects for pride.
* Staff problem solving group.
* Form a service club for students. Staff form on "I need additional help in ...."

* Friday p.m. social discussion at staff home.
* Encourage a class (preferably interested kids) in cooking project utilizing cafeteria staff with parents invited to come in to sample goodies.
* Weekly newsletter to staff on good things the staff does during the week.

Lucia Mar Unified

* Complimentary teachers/classified publicity.
* Secret pal, letters between classes.
* Volunteer thank-you notes.
* Happy grams.
* Mid-year exam for teachers - examine the school.
* Horoscope party monthly.
* Positive failure notes - student writes note to parents about problems.
* Students paint trash cans (school color or mural - their own thing) and areas that usually get vandalized.
* Student-teacher fair - games, picnic sale of art and crafts made by students and/or teachers.

San Lorenzo Unified School District

* Schedule a reasonable number of socials for staff.
* Exchange teaching and administrative assignments.
* Grade level mural - school mural.
* Evening instruction for parents.
* Student advisory committee to principal - other than student council - input, do surveys, etc.
* Develop flower garden areas, Ecology mini-course.
* Bake sales.
* Variety of foods in cafeteria.
* Organized noon intramural league.
* Super stars Golf Tournament

PERSONAL SUGGESTIONS FROM ADMINISTRATORS IN SOME CALIFORNIA SCHOOLS

Here are new, good ideas from California administrators; the ideas have worked. Modifications may be needed for local situations.

Bob Lindstrom - Orcott School District

Integration of classified management into management team.
Management team climate development projects.
Improving school district image - included in this process was the development of promotional buttons with the words "WHERE'S ORCOTT?" At conferences and meetings they attracted a great deal of conversation and knowledge about Orcott School District.
Management training for management team.
Management renewal - delegation of jobs to improve image and enthusiasm of particular jobs.

Walter Klass - Alameda Unified

We did two very important things that helped change the climate, especially in reference to the working relationship between the building principal and the classroom teacher.

In the first project I passed out a list of 45 descriptions as to the role of the principal:

a. Is s/he a curriculum leader
b. P.R. agent
c. Equipment purchaser
d. Part principal - part teacher

A Principal can be anything, but how is the job perceived by the staff and what are the staff's needs from their principal? This list of 45 descriptions was passed out to the teachers; they rated the description as they saw the principal's role. The principal did the same and a comparison was made. The principal received a lot of feedback. Several of the principals changed the emphasis they were placing and school climate improved dramatically.

The second aspect of changing school climate was to initiate what we referred to as - Project Renewal.

A group of six principals got together on a regular basis to review their role as curriculum leaders. The trend today is to refer to the principal as a middle manager. However, if the principal ignores, or does not keep up with curriculum change, all the management in the world will not provide a sound curriculum process.

This group of six principals examined the role of the principal throughly - and initiated ways principals could become more involved in curriculum. As a result, more emphasis was placed on curriculum. Teachers felt better about this, resulting in a sounder curriculum program in their pilot schools...and improved school climates.

BUILDING A COLLEGIAL TEAM: ANOTHER PRACTICAL EFFORT

Building a Collegial Team

In the Cupertino School District one principal, Mr. Bernie LaCasse, saw the need for the development of a Collegial Team for building a strong school climate. His assignment was in one of the oldest schools in the district; attendance was split between a low economic and high economic community. As the Collegial Team Leader he chose six other principals to work with him. Some of the things they dealt with follow:

Students:

- Arrange for at least one assembly each month. All preparatory activities done by the student council.
- Principal sets aside one hour each day for student appointments.
- Principal conducts periodic needs assessment with students.
- Student council records school activities (with a camera purchased by the P.T.A.). Photographs are displayed in each classroom and put in a scrapbook.
- When possible students are presented with problems and asked to find solutions.

Teachers:

- Special memo to the Principal requiring an answer within 24 hours.
- Staff meeting minutes written/typed with "action" items noted the following work day.
- Complaint form for the Principal to complete when a parent, or student, expresses a concern to the Principal.
- At least 24 hours, or more, notice of meetings when possible.
- Clarify with teachers before a topic is discussed whether or not input can change a decision.
- All events, including those of individual teachers placed on a master calendar with other school events.
- Each Friday afternoon a schedule of events for the coming week is typed and distributed to all teachers and school employees.

What is a Collegial Team?

A collegial team is a group of educators interested in their own renewal. They are porfessional colleagues, committed to provide each other with support in the development and implementation of school improvement projects in many cases the collegial team may be composed of several people, each of whom has a project reciprocal support is provided. The size of the group may vary from three to twelve.

Each member of the group:

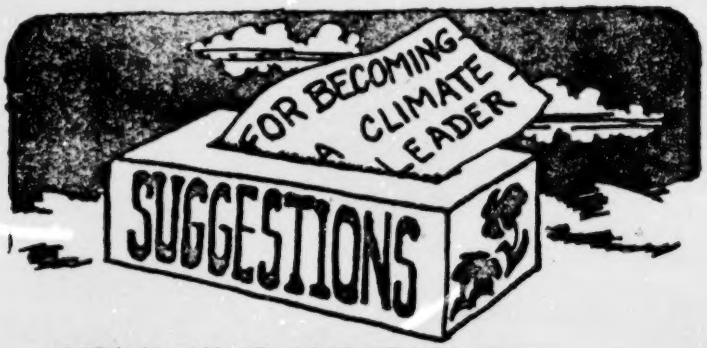
* Designs a plan of personal and professional self-renewal and growth.
* Shares the plan with a team of colleagues.
* Goes through learning and sharing experiences with the team on a regular, committed basis.
* Obtains meaningful feedback and help from colleagues.
* Uses the team to assist in revising personal and professional goals for future growth.

What the Collegial Team is Not:

* It is not a development team or task force set up to get a district job done or to coordinate getting a job done.
* It is not an advisory committee.
* It is not an "inside-outside" team assembled to manage a change process by capitalizing on the unique resources of persons within the system working together with outside consultants.

HOW TO BECOME A SCHOOL CLIMATE LEADER

How does one become a good school climate leader?

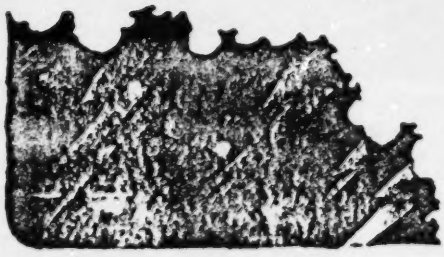


- EXPAND YOUR UNDERSTANDING
- DECIDE IF YOU WANT TO BE A CLIMATE LEADER
- COMMIT YOURSELF TO ACTION
- INDENTIFY & SET PRIORITY OF PROBLEMS
- INVOLVE OTHER PEOPLE
- DESIGN IMPLEMENTATION & FEEDBACK SYSTEMS

More specifically, here are the things that can be done:

ACTION STEPS

1. Read
2. Discuss with other administrators
3. Visit other schools
4. Analyze leadership — McGregor's Theory X & Y
5. Conduct self & school assessment
6. Establish internal support teams & external collegiate teams



But why go to all the trouble anyway? Why improve the school climate? The authors of School Climate Improvement feel the school administrator is first and foremost a climate leader; this role is important if learning is to be improved. Key functions in this role are to:

* Improve the school climate
* Improve the learning environment

A. Schools with Healthy Climate have the following characteristics:

- Innovations are easily developed--that work!
- Teacher relationships are satisfactory.

B. Schools with Unhealthy Climates have the following characteristics:

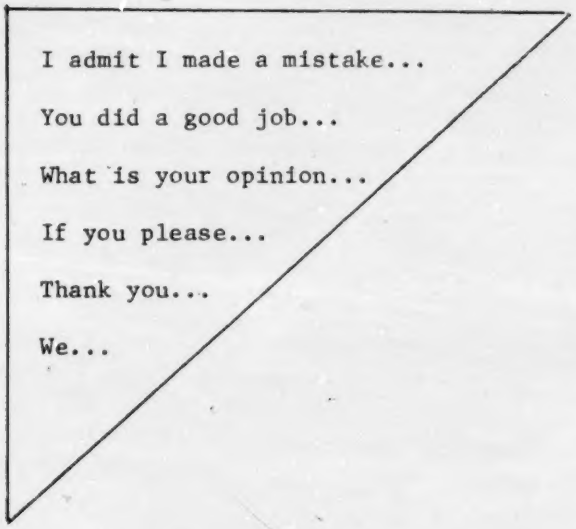
- Low innovativeness drive
- Job dissatisfactions
- Student alienation
- Lack of creativity
- Complacency
- Uniformity
- Frustration

DEVELOPING GOOD PERSONAL ATTITUDES

Good school climate often depends on good personal attitude. The following sentences, words, prose are provided for consideration in developing positive, personal attitudes.

THE TRIANGLE OF GOOD CLIMATE

Things to keep in mind:



IF

If you think you'll lose, you're lost,
For out of the world we find,
Success begins with a fellow's will -
It's all in the state of mind.

If you think you are outclassed, you are,
You've got to think high to rise,
You've got to be sure of yourself before
You can ever win a prize.

Life's battles don't always go
To the stronger or faster man,
But sooner or later the man who wins
Is the man who Thinks He CAN!!!

Anonymous

IT'S DONE WITH MIRRORS

When you get what you want in your struggle for wealth
And the world makes you king for a day,
Just go to the mirror and look at yourself
And see what that man has to say.

For it isn't your father or mother or wife
Upon whose judgment you pass,
The fellow whose verdict counts most in your life
Is the one staring back from the glass.

Some people may think you're a straight-shootin chum
And call you a wonderful guy,
But the man in the glass says you're only a bum
If you can't look him straight in the eye.

He's the fellow to please, never mind all the rest
For he's with you clear to the end,
And you've passed your most dangerous, difficult test
If the man in the glass is your friend.

You may fool the whole world down the pathway of years
And get pats on the back as you pass,
But your final reward will be heartaches and tears
If you've cheated the man in the glass.

Anonymous

(Apologies: This was written before Title IX)

Practice this exercise by substituting first person pronouns (I, me, my).

SUMMARY

These next few years will likely be even more difficult in terms of challenges than any we've faced in the past. Certainly we need to give ample thought to such questions as:

Where are we headed?
Where do we want to go?

Responses to the answers may not necessarily be the same. With such problems in front of us as:

--lack of money...
--low staff morale...
--declining enrollments...
--closing schools...
--job losses...
--student frustrations...
--employee strikes...

The challenges are many and varied. Creative and imaginative approaches are needed for the perplexing problems. Resolutions will likely be more significant if staff, teachers, students, parents, and others pull together cooperatively.

On the preceding pages you have been given many ideas on how to meet some of the numerous problems being faced by school administrators. General examples have been given.

Now it is up to you. The challenges in education in the future are great, but are also very exciting and rewarding.

No one is alone, and no one has all the answers. The administrators indicated as follows, however, are willing to share what they have found with others - give 'em a call.

Human Resources

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Asst. Supt., Ed. Srvs.
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Livermore, CA 94550
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Clinton V. Brown
Adm., Inter. & Career Ed.
Norwalk-La Mirada Unif. SD
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Ronald Brumley, Prin.
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Walter Capri, Prin.
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CFK LTD. PUBLICATIONS

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Shaheen, Thomas A., and Pedrick, W. Roberts. School District Climate Improvement: A Challenge to the School Superintendent.

Fox, Robert S., et al. School Climate Improvement: A Challenge to the School Administrator.

(The above publications may be ordered from Nueva Learning Center, P.O. Box 1366, Burlingame, CA 94010.)

A.C.S.A.

PRESENTORS GUIDES

CONTENTS OF A TYPICAL PRESENTORS GUIDE

All materials necessary to conduct the workshop are provided. Each Presentors Guide differs because of the topic presented. However, a kit would normally contain the following material:

A. Plastic notebook cover for the Presentors Guide
B. An Instructor's Manual or resource book
C. What to do prior to the workshop
D. Sample plan for conduct of the workshop
E. Overhead transparencies to conduct the workshop
F. Suggested handouts (master copies are provided and each trainer reproduces copies for each participant)
   1. Simulation game(s) or participation activities
   2. Workshop evaluation form

Improving School Climate: Clearly there are a number of constraints which get in the way of positive interactions between students, teachers, administrators, parents in most of today's schools. This Presentors Guide builds off of the early research and development conducted by the Denver-based CFK Ltd. Foundation. Both specific and general suggestions for improving the school climate are included in the program format. Specific action plans for improving the climate are anticipated outcomes for the workshop. (Available by March, 1977)

Advisory Committees: Examples and guidelines are given for a number of types of advisory committees. Some items covered are district and individual school advisory committees on budget priority, educational policy planning, fiscal management, and curriculum and instruction committees.

Personal or Program Planning: This described a model of how personal and process goals are designed to help achieve product or educational goals. It also describes the purpose and procedures for development of an activity plan and provides examples to assist the administrator in developing his own plan of action.

Organizational Development: Organizational Development seeks to apply all we know about organizations to solve the practical problems that inevitably arise when people pool their efforts toward common goals. This program was developed by the Stanford Center for Research and Development and stresses the "structural approach" over the more common "human relations approach." Areas included deal with the value of changing the setting, rearranging systematic characteristics, the importance of the formal organization (including size, authority, work interdependence, and evaluation systems), etc.

Participative Management and Decentralized Decision Making: This workshop stresses the involvement process with case studies from districts that are "doing it" with success. It provides both concepts and a working model. Other areas include: philosophy, responsibility, accountability, organization, communications, alternatives, resources, the role of personnel, monitoring, evaluating, board policy, who's involved, and decentralized budgeting.

Shared Decision Making: This workshop is designed to reach three objectives: 1) to familiarize participants with three models of decision making; 2) to discuss critical factors to be considered in designing shared decision making models; 3) to analyze the advantages and disadvantages of these typical decision making models. The package contains individual and group exercises.

School Public Relations: The important roll every member of the school staff plays in a good public relations program is stressed. This includes: the secretarial staff, custodians, aides, teachers, bus drivers, and administrators. Suggestions are given relative to both individual school and district-wide programs. Areas included are: news releases, ideas for topics, use of telephones, visitors, and common pitfalls in public relations programs.

Communication Skills: Today's administrator, perhaps more than ever before, must be able to communicate...that is, to send and receive messages that are understood by a wide array of audiences. There are a number of skills for communication that are learned--this Presentors Guide focuses on practical skills that have been proven as effective in the past. Opportunities for practice are contained in the format for the program.

Problem Solving Techniques: These techniques provide a detailed step-by-step model, with sample analysis forms, that an administrator or staff may utilize to formulate the decision making process. It also provides several alternative problem solving strategies to facilitate planning, such as Force Field and Linear Analysis.

Problem Solving - Force Field: This is a simple technique to assist a teacher or administrator in analyzing forces "working for" and forces "working against" solution of a problem. Materials provide instructions, sample forms, and examples of a Force Field Analysis.

Problem Solving - Delphi: The Delphi Technique is a method for the systematic solicitation and collation of opinion. It is applicable to virtually any decision making process. The Delphi Technique provides the user with ability to involve all clients of the educational community--students, parents, and staff members--in the goal setting process.

Positive Discipline Alternatives: As indicated in the most recent Gallup Polls, discipline is a primary concern for teachers, administrators, and parents. Undoubtedly, to bring about change consideration must be given to the causal factors--and that is the focus of this Presentors Guide. Specific suggestions are given about programs that have worked in a variety of other schools and districts. Focus of the workshop is prevention rather than remediation.

Needs Assessment: The workshop describes a generic model that can be utilized with a variety of techniques for assessing needs and establishing goals. Some of the topics covered are: Establishing goals, designing goal indicators, obtaining consensus, translating indicators into performance objectives, determining degree of student attainment, and selecting areas requiring change.

Time Management: Various techniques are described which assist the school administrator in making better or more productive utilization of his time. The program is designed to be implemented immediately and covers such areas as: finding time often overlooked, correspondence, telephone, visitors, meetings, office procedure, using secretarial time wisely, and delegation.

Presentors Guides may be purchased or rented from ACSA's Norwalk Office, Suite 209, Saddleback Square, 12440 Firestone Blvd., Norwalk, CA 90650 Purchase $45; Rental $15.

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Resources for Social Change: A Guide for School Administrators, Vol. 1, 11, 111. Educational Change Team: School of Education, University of Michigan, 1972.

Watson, Goodwin, ed. Change in School Systems. Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1967.

OTHER ACSA PUBLICATIONS OF POSSIBLE INTEREST:

Operations Notebooks

No. 5 The School Administrators Publicity Handbook
No. 8 Time Management
No. 16 Working With Adivsory Committees - Promising Practices, (32pp)
No. 17 Discipline...Number One Problem in the Schools? - 40 Positive, Preventive Prescriptions For Those Who Care, (61pp)
No. 18 School Community Councils and Advisory Boards - A Notebook for Administrators.

$2.00 each for ACSA members, $4.00, non-members.

Participative Management - Decentralized Decision Making - Working Models, (80pp) Member, $2.50; Non-member, $4.00.
Shared Decision Making - 250-page Training Manual. Member, $15; N-M, $17.

An Organizational Perspective on Planning & Problem Solving In Schools - Applying an organizational, rather than an individualistic, perspective to the solution of school problems is the approach taken in a new monograph for school administrators written by Terrence E. Deal and Jean A. Rosaler of the Environment for Teaching Program at Stanford University and is being used by ACSA's Project Leadership as part of a training package. Member, $3; N-M, $4.50.

Order from ACSA, 1575 Old Bayshore Highway, Burlingame, CA 94010